

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 L-03

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O P 051600Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2044

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0253

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, SHUM, PROP, CG

SUBJ: WESTERN JOURNALISTS SUSPECTED OF ESPIONAGE

REF: (A) KINSHASA 4079, (B) LUBUMBASHI 244

1. SUMMARY. PRESS HAS LINKED STORIES OF CAPTURED GERMAN, FRENCH, ENGLISH, AND SPANISH JOURNALISTS INTO ONE CASE AND SUGGESTED ALL MIGHT BE SPIES. GERMAN AND FRENCH JOURNALISTS IN LUBUMBASHI PRISON SENT TO KOLWEZI MAY 5 WHERE THEY REPORTEDLY WILL BE SENTHZA KINSHASA ALONG WITH SPANISH AND ENGLISH COLLEAGUES IN JAIL IN THAT TOWN. FRENCH AND GERMAN OFFICIALS IN LUBUMBASHI HAVE TRIED TO SECURE RELEASE LOCALLY BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. GERMAN AWAITING MESSAGE WITH SIMILAR REQUEST FROM HIS FOREIGN MINISTER WHICH HE HOPES TO DELIVER DIRECTLY TO NGUZA KARL-I-BOND EVENING OF MAY 5 IN LUBUMBASHI. ACCUSATIONS THAT JOURNALISTS OF FRIENDLY WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE SPIES AND RECENT BRUTALITIES BY ZAIRIAN ARMY AGAINST LOCAL POPULATION EXPECTED TO HAVE VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT IN EYES OF WESTERN NATIONS IF ISSUES NOT RESOLVED BEFORE CASE GETS OUT OF HAND. END SUMMARY.

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2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. MAY 5 MJUMBE CARRIED STORY ON ARREST OF JOURNALISTS FROM STERN, LONDON OBSERVER, AND SPANISH TV AT MUTSHATSHA. ARTICLE

SAYS JOURNALISTS AND FILMS THEY TOOK TO BE SHOWN TO INTERNATIONAL PRESS IN KINSHASA AND THEIR RESPECTIVE

AMBASSADORS TO DETERMINE IF THEY SPIES OR JOURNALISTS. ARTICLE STATES JOURNALISTS HAD SECRET CONTACTS WITH ANTI-MOBUTU ELEMENTS, OBTAINED FALSE LAISSEZ-PASSERS TO ENTER ZAIRE FROM POLITICAL DIRECTOR MPLA AFTER BEING REFUSED ZAIRIAN VISAS, TOOK SUBVERSIVE FILMS, AND HAD ADDRESSES OF CONTACTS IN SHABA GIVEN THEM BY ANTI-MOBUTU CONTACTS WHEN CAPTURED. MJUMBE SAYS JOURNALISTS WOULD HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IMMEDIATELY IN MUTSHATSHA HAD PRESIDENT MOBUTU NOT BEEN THERE, AND CALLS ON CERTAIN MEMBERS OF FOREIGN PRESS TO LET ZAIRE FOLLOW OWN COURSE INSTEAD OF SOWING DISORDER AND SUBVERSION. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. MJUMBE STORY COMBINES, CONFUSES, AND EMBELLISHES TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS INVOLVING ARRESTS OF GERMAN/FRENCH JOURNALISTS ON ONE HAND AND ENGLISH JOURNALIST/SPANISH TV TEAM ON OTHER. GERMAN/FRENCH STERN JOURNALISTS ARRESTED AFTER CROSSING ZAMBIAN-ZAIRIAN BORDER AT KUFSUMBALESA, SUPPOSEDLY WITH LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM ANTI-MOBUTU LEADER RAPHAEL MUMBA (REFTEL A). ENGLISH JOURNALIST/SPANISH TV TEAM ARRESTED MORE RECENTLY IN MUTSHATSHA AFTER HAVING CROSSED ZAMBIAN BORDER AND WANDERED INTO TOWN SHORTLY AFTER ZAIRIAZN ARMY RETOOK MUTSHATSHA (REFTEL B).

4. GERMAN EMBOFF FROM KINSHASA EMBASSY CURRENTLY IN LUBUMBASHI, UNOFFICIAL GERMAN HONORARY CONSUL TO LUBUMBASHI, FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL

AND LOCAL ZAIRIAN LAWYER MET MAY 5 TO DISCUSS SITUATION. ZAIRIAN LAWYER AND LOCAL DIRECTOR CND (STATE SECURITY) TOLD HIM FRENCH/GEIXAN JOURNALISTS DUE TO BE FLOWN TO KOLWEZI AT 1130 LOCAL TIME, THEN ON TO KINSHASA, PRESUMABLY WITH ENGLISH JOURNALIST/CONFIDENTIAL

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SPANISH TV TEAM. CND DIRECTOR SAID MATTER TOO SENSITIVE FOR HIM TO DISCUSS WITH LAWYER, THAT AFFAIR OVER THEIR HEADS AND NOW AN AFFAIR OF STATE.

5. WHILE IN MEETING, GERMAN EMBOFF IN LUBUMBASHI RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM FRG FOREIGN MINISTRY SAYING FONMIN GENSCHER HAD JUST SENT PERSONAL MESSAGE FOR ZAIRIAN FONMIN NGUZA REMINDING HIM OF GENSCHER'S INTENTION TO VISIT ZAIRE MAY 16 AND URGING HIM TO SECURE RELEASE OF STERN JOURNALISTS. GERMAN EMBOFF WILL TRY TO CONVEY MESSAGE TO NGUZA AS SOON AS PROMISED TELEX ARRIVES. NGUZA CURRENTLY IN KOLWEZI, SO GERMAN EMBOFF AND FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL SOUGHT APPOINTMENT WITH REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE IN LUBUMBASHI TO TRANSMIT MESSAGE, AND WERE HIRNED DOWN. PRESUMABLY, LOCAL OFFICIALS DO NOT WANT TO TOUCH CASE. GERMAN HOPES TO DELIVER MESSAGE THIS EVENING (IF IT ARRIVES) WHEN ZAIRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER RETURNS TO LUBUMBASHI.

6. WHILE AT SAME A.M. MEETING, GERMAN EMBOFF ALSO RECEIVED TWO

PHONE CALLS FROM STERN IN HAMBURG ASKING FOR FURTHER DETAILS. STERN SAID IT HAD LEARNED THAT COURT-MARTIAL TRIAL BEING PREPARED IN KINSHASA FOR CAPTURED JOURNALISTS. U.S. CONSUL ALSO RECEIVED PHONE CALL THIS A.M. FROM STERN ASKING IF USG COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE.

7. CONSULATE COMMENT: FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL AND GERMAN EMBOFF VERY EXERCISED BY PUBLICATION OF ARTICLE FILLED WITH HALF-TRUTHS AND NON-TRUTHS AND WITH APPARENT ZAIRIAN INTENT TO TRY TO SCORE PROPAGANDA POINTS AGAINST INVADERS/SUBVERTERS BY USING WESTERN JOURNALISTS. THEY FEEL NOTHING LESS THAN STRONG UNITED DEMARCHE BY CONCERNED WESTERN AMBASSADORS CAN PREVENT GOZ FROM DIGGING ITS OWN GRAVE IN THIS AFFAIR. CONSULATE AGREES THAT GOZ APPEARS TO BE PROCEEDING AHEAD IN WITCHHUNT FOR SUSPECTED INFILTRATORS IN PAY OF COMMUNISTS WITH INSUFFICIENT REGARD FOR LIKELY PUBLIC REACTION IN KEY WESTERN FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. IN CONJUNCTION WITH LIKELY UNFAVORABLE REACTION IN ITALY ONCE
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DETAILS OF
FAZ MAY 4 MURDER OF ITALIAN MINING ENGINEER KNOWN,
AS WELL AS GENERAL ANTI-ZAIRIAN REACTION IF STORIES OF MASSACRES NEAR LUFUPA BREAK, GOZ SEEMS ON VERGE OF CREATING CONSIDERABLE ILL WILL WITH CRUCIAL FRIENDS AND ARMS SUPPLIERS IN WEST UNLESS IT DRAWS BACK FRONT BRINK. JOURNALISTS' ENTRY INTO COUNTRY ILLEGAL, THEIR MOVEMENTS CERTAINLY CURIOUS AND FOOLISH IN CONTEXT OF WAR IN ZAIRE, AND GOZ SUSPICIONS OF THEM UNDOUBTEDLY REAL, BUT IF GOZ DOES NOT WAKE UP TO CONSEQUENCES OF ILL-ADVISED COURSE OF ACTION IT MAY BE IN FOR DIFFICULT DIPLOMATIC SAILING IN COMING DAYS.
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